

108TH CONGRESS
2D Session

H. CON. RES. 496

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress with regard to providing humanitarian assistance to countries of the Caribbean devastated by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne.

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Whereas in May 2004, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) predicted that 2004 would be an above-normal Atlantic hurricane season;

Whereas from August to September 2004 Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne devastated countries of the Caribbean and the southern, midwestern, and eastern regions of the United States;

Whereas the people of the United States, who have encountered the harsh consequences of the recent hurricanes, can empathize with the countries of the Caribbean as they begin the recovery process;

Whereas Hurricane Frances displaced 800 people and destroyed 80 homes in the Bahamas;

Whereas Hurricane Frances caused an estimated \$125,000,000 in damage to the islands of the Bahamas;

Whereas four hurricanes have struck the region within five weeks;

Whereas 90 percent of homes in Grenada sustained significant damage as a result of Hurricane Ivan;

Whereas the International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that 60,000 of the 95,000 inhabitants of Grenada were made homeless as a result of the devastation;

Whereas Hurricane Ivan is the worst natural disaster to hit Jamaica in 50 years;

Whereas an estimated 13,000 Jamaicans were displaced during Hurricane Ivan;

Whereas more than 60 people died and hundreds were injured as a result of Hurricanes Charley, Frances, and Ivan;

Whereas as a result of Hurricane Jeanne, at least 2,000 people have died in Haiti while it is estimated that another 1,000 people are currently missing;

Whereas many others have died in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico due to Hurricane Jeanne;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development reports that there is flooding in more than 80 per-

cent of Gonaives, Haiti, and more than 30 percent of Port-de-Paix, Haiti;

Whereas hurricane recovery assistance is being sought from the Caribbean-American community, the European Union, and Canada;

Whereas the financial burden of providing emergency and reconstruction assistance to the devastated countries is much greater than the Caribbean region can sustain by itself;

Whereas the cost of providing humanitarian emergency assistance to the countries of the Caribbean continues to increase with each natural disaster;

Whereas the cost of assisting Grenada, Jamaica, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and other island nations with reconstruction after the hurricane season of 2004 could exceed \$250,000,000;

Whereas in addition to disaster relief, governments of the countries of the Caribbean are under pressure to secure their communities and prevent looters and other criminals from causing further harm to their citizens who are struggling to recover from the devastation caused by the hurricanes;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development's Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) is coordinating with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) and members of the Eastern Caribbean Donor Group (ECDG), including the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the Canadian International Develop-

ment Agency (CIDA) to provide urgently needed food, potable water, temporary shelter, and other basic necessities;

Whereas multilateral development banks, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, and other international organizations, such as the United Nations and the Organization of American States, have joined the United States in providing urgently needed assistance to the countries of the Caribbean that have suffered the most from the effects of the hurricanes;

Whereas the damage caused by the hurricanes have demonstrated that proper building and housing codes that are consistently enforced significantly reduce the human and financial toll caused by natural disasters;

Whereas the Caribbean region is recognized as the third border of the United States and the economic turmoil caused by the hurricanes of August and September 2004 will have an effect on the United States; and

Whereas the countries of the Caribbean will need significant assistance from the international community for both relief and reconstruction efforts: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) commends the governments of the countries
4 of the Caribbean for their efforts to respond and as-
5 sist the people of the region after the devastation
6 caused by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and
7 Jeanne from August to September 2004;

1 (2) commends the efforts of the Caribbean-
2 American community to provide relief to family and
3 friends suffering in the region;

4 (3) supports the efforts of the United States
5 Government to assist in coordinating international
6 efforts to help the people of the region, particularly
7 in Grenada, Jamaica, Haiti, and the Bahamas, with
8 assessing damage and providing relief to affected
9 communities;

10 (4) urges the international community to take
11 all necessary steps to provide emergency relief and
12 support reconstruction efforts; and

13 (5) urges the President, acting through the Ad-
14 ministrator of the United States Agency for Inter-
15 national Development to—

16 (A) continue to make available to private
17 volunteer organizations, United Nations agen-
18 cies, and regional institutions the necessary
19 funding to mitigate the effects of the recent
20 natural disasters that have devastated the coun-
21 tries of the Caribbean; and

1 (B) provide assistance for the promulga-
2 tion and enforcement of housing and building
3 codes in the countries of the Caribbean.

Passed the House of Representatives October 4,
2004.

Attest:

Clerk.